

# ***Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee***

## ***Meeting Minutes***

### ***December 21, 2006***

**Members Present:** Genny Hardesty, Bob Middleton, Renee Okon, Jon Lourie, Abrielle Anderson, Pete Esker, Nancy Schwiesow, Bryant Foulger, Charles Atwell

**Members Absent:** Edward Baca-Asher, Barbara Henry

**Guest:** Commander Davis, Don Scheuerman, Don Hague, Nelson Leenhouts  
Rick Siebert

**Staff:** Gary Stith, Vicki Lockerman and Susan Hoffmann

**Welcome/Introductions** – Genny Hardesty, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**Motion:** (Middleton, Henry) the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee approved the October 2006 as amended with 1 abstention.

**Amended changes are:**

***Page 12 change Ray Choice to Ray's Classics***

***Page 21 of the Retreat Follow-up***

***Safety, Traffic – Transit Center Coordinator – Abrielle Anderson***

***Continuing Redevelopment, Private Public (civic building constructions management library),***

***Purple Line Coordinator – Bob Middleton***

#### **Chairs Report:**

Genny Hardesty reported that:

- At the retreat it was decided that the Urban District Advisory Committee, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, and Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce have a joint meeting with the newly elected County Executive and County Council to bring forth our major concerns. We decided that it would be beneficial not only to independently go to the newly elected officials but also jointly represent the community with three or four major items that we consider something we don't want forgotten or dropped off. We are trying to schedule a joint meeting consisting of the Boards and Committees of those three groups on January 11. An announcement will go out shortly and please try to attend. We are also trying to narrow down a date to meet with the County Executive.

#### **Retreat Follow-up**

- Thanks to everyone that participated at the Retreat. Having our new members and partners in attendance made it a wonderful event. We accomplished a lot and the facilitators from Indigo have a way of making you perform. We addressed long-term goals one to five years, and the short term goals which are more immediate. We have narrowed the list down to items that are important to all of us. We want more retail and

for the newly elected officials to realize that the development in Silver Spring is not done. The theme is *"We are not done yet!"*

### **Police Update**

Commander Davis reported that:

- There was a robbery at the subway station last night and we believe that the suspect was also involved in the robbery in Takoma Park. Our major Crime Division is working on this issue.
- The Wachovia Bank, at 8701 Georgia Avenue was robbed earlier today.
- We had a number of commercial burglaries where suspects are going in and taking the cash register. A Patrol Officer stopped a gentlemen in White Oak and identified him as a career criminal that has a known history and we sent this information to our Undercover Squad and the suspect has been captured.
- We had a double fatal under the railroad bridge. I talk to the Collision Group Construction Unit and they do believe the guy they have is the driver of the car and they are working on following up on the individual that hit those poor innocent people that where traveling to the Metro.
- We met with CASA Friday night and had the 911 Dispatcher from El Salvador and Brain Melby the new Director of our Communications Center do a presentation in Spanish to the community on how to call 911, and why we asked questions and the presentation was well received. We received a lot of compliments on how the Police interact with the community. At some point I would like for this Committee to meet the new Director.
- East Regional Center put on an Apartment Buildings Management Luncheon and I had an opportunity to met with the Apartment Managers and let them know various things that are available for the Police to assist them.
- Commander Davis will be meeting with DPWT after the first of the year about the Forest Glen Bridge and she had information on call boxes from a local vendor that we may be able to use. We will go over the survey and discuss some recommendations and hopefully some of them will be implemented and some of the problems on the bridge will be addressed. There are some concerns and we still don't have any suspects in the two robberies that occurred on the bridge.
- The Police are working closely with DPWT. We are communicating with Tim Cupples, DPWT staff member who we can call 24 hours day to report problems pertaining to the bridge and he will immediately respond. DPWT has been very good working with us.
- We conducted a pedestrian sting at the crossroads at University Blvd and New Hampshire Avenue with CSAFE last week and actually noticed a decrease in the population crossing mid-cross and using the crosswalk. We have done these at least four times a year and have been pretty successful.
- We have had two deceased individuals found on the streets of downtown Silver Spring and both appeared to be homeless individuals, one Latino and the other African American. The toxicology reports will not be back for 6 to 8 weeks. It does not look like we have a string of homicides but homeless individual getting very intoxicated.
- "Cops in Shops" Program is an initiative that Wheaton is doing to encompass education and awareness about serving alcohol to habitual drinkers and individuals under 21. The

program is a multi-pronged approach to working with business establishments that sell or serve alcohol.

- Beginning mid-January the Sobering Center Initiative should start and we will have a unit working the Streets in downtown Silver Spring and Long Branch. HHS will have a group hopefully working from 2:00 p.m. until midnight, Monday through Saturday dealing with inebriated individuals to try and get them to a detox bed rather than arresting them. The facility will be located on Avery Road in Rockville and they will have their own van, a small office space in the CBD to use the phone.
- On the County website there is a press release talking about crime stats for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Robbery is up nationally and in Montgomery County. A Task Force is being developed to concentrate on the robbery problem for both commercial and street robberies because it is up 14% in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.
- The Police are working closely with SSRC, DPWT, and other on the Transit Center.
- Thanks to the Chamber and businesses members for helping feed the officers during the holidays.
- We have done the pedestrian sting at East-West and Colesville and they are productive.

### **Discussion:**

Abrielle Anderson asked if a pedestrian sting could be done in Silver Spring.

Commander Davis responded that the pedestrian sting was at East-West and Colesville and they have been productive.

Jon Lourie asked if the general perception that the conflict between pedestrian and automobiles is primarily pedestrian caused.

Commander Davis responded that in Long Branch and the Crossroads area the problem is the language barrier and customs. We are trying to educate pedestrian because it is a number one issue and we have had more people killed by automobile than from homicide. The approach consists of three steps, education, engineering, and enforcement. If we could get all three to work at the same time we would be able to solve the problem.

Jon Lourie asked who would address the need for a red arrow light signal on south bound Colesville Road.

Gary Stith responded that it is a State Road and there has been talk of the State doing a re-design at this intersection and the signal system. They would like to look at the possibility of a double left which would have a red left arrow which means more people could go through on the arrow.

Jon Lourie stated the problem is if the pedestrian waits for the light and so many cars run through and turn the actual crossing time is limited pedestrian are really at a threat to cross Georgia Avenue and East-West and 16<sup>th</sup> Street is another problem area.

Charles Atwell asked what the timing was on the study.

Gary Stith responded that he did not know if they had actually moved forward and that he would have to check.

Charles Atwell asked if there was a relationship to those two studies and the Transit Center.

Gary Stith responded that the two studies had nothing to do with the Transit Center project.

### **Falkland Residential Project:**

Don Hague, Vice President of Development and Nelson Leenhouts, co-Chairman and co-Founder of Home Properties Inc. gave an overview on the Falkland Residential Project summarization of the project is as follows:

- Home Properties Inc is the sixth largest publicly traded multifamily Real Estate Invest Trust (NYSE: HME). Home Properties currently owns and manages approximately 40,000 apartments in 10 states and purchased the Falkland in 2003.
- The existing Falkland Chase Apartment is comprised of three parcels; the North, East and West parcels. A total of 450 apartments in the community as follows: East Parcel 147 apartments, West Parcel – 121 apartments; North Parcel 182 apartments. The North Parcel buildings will be demolished and the units on the other parcels will be preserved.
- The cupola building at the northeast corner of Colesville Road and 16<sup>th</sup> Street is the only structure designated as an historic building. In 2003 the County proposed putting the structure on the Historic Atlas with the caveat that the North Parcel could be removed for future development. All three parcels are on the Locational Atlas of Historic Properties. As part of this proposal for the Falkland North project, Home Properties will agree to cooperate with placing the East and West parcels under an Historical Easement to preserve these properties. In addition Homes Properties will agree to invest \$3 million in preserving the exteriors of the buildings on the East and West parcels.
- The North Parcel is located at the northeast corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and East-West Highway and less than 1,000 feet from the entrance to the Metro on the north side of Colesville Road. The proposed project would have 1,020 apartment units; 892 market rate and 128 MPDUs, 50,000 SF grocery store (letter of intent signed with Harris Teeter). Resident amenities including clubhouse and pool; fitness center; children's play area; tot lot; sun deck; conference room; picnic and sitting areas. *(For more detailed information on the presentation please refer to handout titled Falkland North Development Overview).*

### **Discussion:**

Charles Atwell asked if the project was far enough in the pipeline that they will not be adversely affected if there was a moratorium on development

Don Hague stated that the project was in the Enterprise Zone and the transit district so we are exempt.

Gary Stith stated that the Annual Growth Policy requirements may apply to this project and if that is the case then there may be more transportation test or whatever they come up with that may impact the project.

Jon Lourie asked if Homes Properties has submitted a project plan review and wanted to know if this overview presented today was for informational purposes only. The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board's CED and Transportation/Pedestrian Safety Committees recently held a joint

meeting and I wanted to share some of the comments made at that meeting regarding the project. A project of this size is very welcomed considering it will be next to the transportation hub, the new transit center and the need for housing units in Montgomery County would serve us all well. There are some concerns about the size and perception of the buildings and the fact that they are all the same and same materials because it is a very large development. Obviously going from Standard Method to Optional Method Development is a substantial increase in the size of the project and part of that mechanism to use Optional Method Development is the creation of the public space amenity. This has become a hot topic for Silver Spring Redevelopment in regard to the new Civic Building/Veterans Plaza and the desire to have more green space in the CBD area. The County does not plan green space and leaves it up to Optional Method Development to sort of implement new green space within the CBD.

My question is what is the best use of the green space and how does it best service the public? With the Veterans Plaza site there has discussion about how to activate a site if it is public use, the relationship between retail and the outdoor public space, how can it be used by the public, and is it just for leisure activities such as strolling, sitting, reading a book and what would be the best composition of such a space. It is great that the project has a grocery store but I don't know how you can get that to interact with the public space in terms of seating or a café. Another issue was accessibility and not being able to walk through the site. The site is along East-West Highway and not something the public will use to get to another location further up 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The public needs to be involved and interact with Home Properties in regards to what is best use and application for that.

Nelson Leenhouts and Don Hague responded that they would like a letter of support from the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee. In regard to the other concerns at this point we do have a lot of flexibility and this is probably one of the greatest opportunities for green space. The main message is we have spent a lot of time designing this and kind of like it but we are very flexible. We think it would be a very difficult design so the public could walk from entrance to the north up to the corner of the building but we are certainly open to ideas.

Bob Middleton asked if Home Properties would be open to the idea of having youth involved in the planning of the space. Your project has 65,000 square foot for a public park and one of the criticisms of what has happened with the downtown Silver Spring is that there has not been a lot of youth involvement at the beginning. This to me seems like a golden opportunity to dispel some of the criticism and put you on the cutting edge of citizen participation in a project which might benefit the overall community and would you be opened to that idea.

Jon Lourie asked what would be the best way to approach your organization to have a dialogue between Home Properties and the community.

Gary Stith responded that we could work with Home Properties to set-up a design show and invite groups that are interested in this project.

**Motion:** (Atwell, Anderson) the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee agreed to write a letter of support for the Falkland Residential Project with one abstention.

## **Transit Center Interim Operation Site Update:**

Don Scheuerman, DPWT, Division of Capital Development gave the following overview:

### **Project Background**

- Silver Spring Metrorail is the busiest station in Maryland and the second busiest of all the metrorail stations. It currently has nearly 59,000 passengers per day, 145 buses per peak hour which will increase, congested roadways, buses crossing mid-block and dangerous for pedestrians.

### **Project Goals in support of the new Silver Spring**

- Provide a first class/state-of-the-art Transit Facility with room for future projected service. Provide efficient connections between existing and anticipated transit types. To strengthen pedestrian connections to the transit station from all areas of Silver Spring and to create a safe, secure, maintainable, and inviting environment for users.
- To meet the objective stated in the adopted Silver Spring CBD Sector plan to create a varied and active town center, with housing, office, and retail development in a pedestrian friendly environment, enhanced with parks and open space. Develop quality open space and amenities for users and to achieve the investment value and functional benefits of Transit-Oriented Development and maximize visibility and sunlight for public space.

### **Transit Center Program and features**

- Multi-tiered/multi-modal Transit Center, enhance metro red line access from Bus, MARC, pedestrian movements, increase bus bay count, vehicular access for kiss and Ride drop-off and taxis, enhanced urban park and connections to hiker/biker trail systems, inter-city bus terminal, MARC Station, accommodate the future bi-county transitway, prepare to accommodate information, technology for real-time scheduling signage, multi-modal commuter store: Metro/MARC/Ride-On and improve traffic flow, reducing conflicts between cars and buses.

### **Moving Buses Out**

- During construction the bus operations will move one block east to Wayne, Dixon and Bonifant, use curbside bus stops (24). All existing bus routes continue to operate as well as Metro and MARC. Kiss & Ride mid-day parking in the Bonifant garage and disabled parking in Dixon garage.

### **Temporary Changes during Interim Operations Site**

- The Wayne Avenue median will have a pedestrian fence to reduce mid-block crossings.
- Street trees will be removed to allow larger/wider sidewalks on the south side of Wayne Avenue and Dixon Avenue. New trees will be planted at the completion of the Interim Operations Site per MNCPPC and DPWT recommendations.

### **Permanent Improvements to the CBD**

- New traffic signal at Dixon and Wayne Avenue with signalized pedestrian cross walks, new street lights on west side of Dixon and new Street lights on east side of Ramsey.
- New Trail connection from Bonifant to the New Metropolitan Branch Trail
- Closure of the Jug Handle to two-way traffic. The Jug Handle will be eliminated and become a park area once the Transit Center opens.
- New Mid-Block crossing of Colesville with signalized pedestrian cross walks between Wayne and East-West Highway (north of overpass). Green left arrow traffic signal from

Wayne into Georgia, two eastbound lanes from Bonifant into Georgia Avenue and new SW entrance to the Silver Spring Metro Station.

### **Police and Urban District**

- Increase of police patrols, use of crossing guards from morning (6:30 to 9:30) and after (4:00 to 7:00) rush hours and assigned uniformed officers 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Hire 4 new Urban District maintenance staff specifically for Interim Operations Site, hiring of 4 new safety staff (goodwill ambassadors) specifically for Interim Operations Site and improve communications.
- There will be an addition of a third VANGO circulator in Silver Spring to address ADA and frequency. Interim Operation Site will have reduced dwell time for buses and location of break times will be adjusted to reduce residual number of buses within the interim operations site. The hours of operation for the VANGO are not being changed.
- Public Information Office includes MTA, WMATA, Ride On, DPWT, Montgomery County and Silver Spring Regional Center distributed informational oversized card on November 28, 2006. Information Campaign include signage, posters, handouts, Public service Announcements 30-90 days out from relocation of the buses to interim operation site and guidance for implementation of wayfinding signage for pedestrians.
- Don Scheuerman is asking the working group for the first two weeks and longer if necessary to meet daily to review, debrief, and determine if changes are necessary. Ongoing the Operations group will meet weekly and more if necessary to review, debrief, and determine if changes are needed and for the week when schools return from summer vacation and longer if necessary that the Operations Group will meet daily to review, debrief, and determine if changes are necessary. *(For specific details and photos of the PowerPoint presentation please refer to handout).*

### **Discussion**

Pete Esker asked where the Metro police figure into this scenario.

Don Scheuerman responded that this operation is on Montgomery County Streets and therefore Montgomery County is responsible.

Commander Davis responded that Montgomery County Police will take on this burden but once the Transit Center is complete we need to have Metro Transit Police more involved.

Rick Siebert stated that the PLD is not thrilled either with the lack of support from WMATA Metro Police. We are relocating the metro kiss and ride facility to the inside of a county garage.

### **Marketing and Special Events Report**

Susan Hoffmann reported that:

- The written report was in the packet on page 28 and that she would be elated to answer questions.
- Channel 9 has agreed to be our television partner for the Jazz Festival. They are going to cut some ads for us and possibly provide the MC from their talent.
- Received a copy of *Landmarks of Montgomery County* it is a book that is in hotel rooms and has been distributed throughout the County. There is a full page ad about us with a byline that I wrote. A total of 4,354 books have been distributed throughout the County

and distribution locally was 231 Crown Plaza, 263 Hilton and 130 Ramada. In addition 7 hotels received these in Rockville, 6 in Gaithersburg, 5 in Bethesda and 1 in Germantown so hopefully we will get interest from people through the ad and article that was written about all the exciting things happening in downtown Silver Spring.

### **Director Report:**

Gary Stith reported that:

- The Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee will host a meeting with the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, and the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce on January 11, 4:30 p.m. at Discovery Communications Inc. One Discovery Place. Topic of Discussion: Find common priorities for Silver Spring and how to best share this information with the County Executive and County Council.
- There will be a Budget Forum Meeting on January 23, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at Long Branch Community Center, 8700 Piney Branch Road. Topic of discussion: FY-08 County Operating Budget.
- The Charter House basement flooded and caused extensive damage to the electrical and mechanical systems in the basement and the repairs have taken longer than first anticipated. The County has assisted in making sure housing was available and most are staying at the Crown Plaza. The County Executive was going to meet with them at the Crown Plaza at 5:00 this evening. AFI sent 100 coupons so they could go see movies and we are assisting with providing meals. We have had a lot of local businesses, and Discovery so we have had a great response from the Silver Spring community.

Susan Hoffmann stated that the Charter House owner have given the tenants a month of free rent and the County has stepped in. The tenants are responsible for what they originally pay for rent monthly and the different between the hotel and their rent is being picked-up by the County.

- Sent an e-mail to Park and Planning on behalf of Jon Lourie's request to have a joint meeting regarding retail and open space issues and I have not received a response as of today but once I do receive a date I will let you know.
- DHCA projects are making a lot of progress. Sidewalk replacement improvements have been done in Montgomery Hills and the landscaping and streetlighting will be done next spring.
- DHCA finished the sidewalk improvements along the driveway connecting the Kennett Street garage over at Eastern Avenue. There are some signage improvements that DPWT will eventually come and do.
- Rick Siebert stated it will not be re-opened until all the improvements are complete. I will be scheduling a walk-through with Al Roshdieh prior to the re-opening.

### **Discussion**

Bob Middleton asked if the ULI Report been received.

Gary Stith responded that the final report is not completed. We have seen a draft and made changes and returned it to ULI. I called today and found out that the Executive Director who was working on the report last day of work was December 14 and the new Director does not start until January 2.



Genny Hardesty took the opportunity to thank the staff of both the local Fire and Police Department that serve and protect us in emergencies and the men and women servicing our Country at home and abroad and their families especially at this time of year.

**Meeting adjourned 5:30 p.m.**

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